



Monica Moorehead
for President

Lamont
Lilly
for V.P

San Francisco

People's power defeats new jail

By Dave Welsh
 San Francisco

Dec. 18 – Against all odds, a grassroots coalition has defeated a plan to build a new, 384-bed downtown jail at a cost of between \$240 million and \$465 million, with 30 years of debt financing. In what the No New SF Jail Coalition called “an historic moment in our long and difficult fight against jail expansion,” the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted on Dec. 15 to reject the new jail plan.

“I am not going to support another stand-alone jail to continue to lock up African Americans and Latinos in this city. We are not going to continue to lock up people who have mental illness and substance abuse problems and clearly need to be treated,” said Board President London Breed, reported the Dec. 14 San Francisco Examiner.

Activists shut down budget meeting

The decisive moment in the two-year No New SF Jail campaign may have come earlier on Dec. 2, when about 100 people took over the Board of Supervisors chambers in City Hall to demand “Stop the jail project now!” As five young organizers deployed a lockdown, the crowd unfurled a banner and shut down a Budget Committee meeting that had been expected to rubber-stamp the jail proposal.

Meanwhile, three young Black women led nonstop chanting and dancing for more than two hours until police cleared the room. They chanted, “Lift us up, don’t lock us up,” “Kids not cages,” “Affordable housing, not jail beds,” “Supervisor Tang, do the right thang” and “House keys, not handcuffs.” Protesters shook their keys in time with the chant. When an official tried to stop the chanting, saying, “So we can get on with public comments,” an older man shouted, “This is public comment!”

Last-minute vote was unanimous

The fate of the jail proposal was touch and go, right up until the last minute. Many people thought the plan would pass, as it was backed by the sheriff, the mayor and other movers and shakers in the city. As a No New SF Jail Coalition statement said, “This just goes to show that when we use our people power we actually shift our political conditions and realities.” (Dec. 16) In the end, the board vote on Dec. 15 was a unanimous “No!”

Community members had testified at the public hearing and made key points: Some 85 percent of people in the San Francisco jail are simply awaiting trial and cannot afford bail. So the jail is really “a paupers’ prison.” They stressed that African Americans make up more than half of those locked up in city jails, yet are only 4 percent of the city’s population, as a result of gentrification, displacement and lack of jobs.

Another point raised was that jail promoters used tricky financing — “certificates of participation,” where taxpayers pay a higher interest rate — in order

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Hundreds of people from the various communities and organizations that reflect New York City’s working class gathered at Fifth Avenue and 56th Street at the Trump Towers on Dec. 20 to say “No to Trump, no to racism and immigrant bashing, no to Islamophobia, no to war.” Donald Trump has focused on a racist message in his public statements and his campaign rallies have opened their doors to some of the most reactionary fascist elements in the country.

If there was one central message of the protest, it was the call for unity in the struggle against racism. For two hours people representing the different groups came to the microphone and gave a shout out for unity of the working class and all oppressed communities. Many

Muslims were present, with their mosques or organizations, and gave a strong message that they could stand up proudly without having to apologize before the attacks of Islamophobes like Trump.

Following the rally, the demonstrators marched to Sixth Avenue and then downtown to protest at the headquarters of Fox News, the Wall Street Journal and the New York Post. They targeted these corporate media for the support they have given to Trump’s reactionary and racist ideas. The organizers from the International Action Center and other organizations said at the rally they consider today’s action “just a beginning” in the mobilization to stop Trump and others like him.

— Story and photo by John Catalinotto

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WORKERS WORLD

this week

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But printing, mailing and posting the paper 51 weeks a year cost a lot of money. Much more than is covered by our modest \$30 subscription fee or \$1 per issue. We feel strongly that we need to keep the price low so that the vast majority of people can afford it. All of our staff contribute their time, talent and socialist viewpoint to help subsidize the paper and make it accessible to our readers.

That's why we appeal to our readers and subscribers for various kinds of financial help. Twice a year, spring and fall, we make an appeal for funds to specifically help subsidize production of WW. Now we're about to conclude the Fall Fund Drive. We hope you'll give as generously as you can so WW can begin a new year of struggle

on a sound financial footing. Keeping the paper strong during the coming election year is essential to showing what sets our socialist candidates apart from other third parties, let alone the two ruling-class parties.

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We're taking a break

In order to see that our staff of volunteers gets to take a well-earned break, Workers World skips one issue a year. Our next issue will be dated Jan. 14, 2016, and will be mailed out on Jan. 7.

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

Who we are & what we're fighting for

Hate capitalism? Workers World Party fights for a socialist society — where the wealth is socially owned and production is planned to satisfy human need. This outmoded capitalist system is dragging down workers' living standards while throwing millions out of their jobs. If you're young, you know they're stealing your future. And capitalism is threatening the entire planet with its unplanned, profit-driven stranglehold over the means of production.

Workers built it all — it belongs to society, not to a handful of billionaires! But we need a revolution to make that change. That's why for 56 years WWP has been building a revolutionary party of the working class inside the belly of the beast.

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

degrading people because of their nationality, sexual or gender identity or disabilities — all are tools the ruling class uses to keep us apart. They ruthlessly super-exploit some in order to better exploit us all. WWP builds unity among all workers while supporting the right of self-determination. Fighting oppression is a working-class issue, which is confirmed by the many labor struggles led today by people of color, immigrants and women.

WWP has a long history of militant opposition to imperialist wars. The billionaire rulers are bent on turning back the clock to the bad old days before socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles liberated territory from their grip. We've been in the streets to oppose every one of imperialism's wars and aggressions. □

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Mumia Abu-Jamal gets hep C hearing in court

By **Betsey Piette**
Scranton, Pa.

It was a full-court press by supporters of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal as he brought his case seeking proper medical care to treat the hepatitis C virus against the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections to U.S. District Court in Scranton, Pa., on Dec. 18. Abu-Jamal is suing the DOC and doctors at SCI-Mahanoy for intentional medical neglect and malpractice, violations of the Eighth Amendment's protection against cruel and unusual punishment.

Nearly 80 people packed the main courtroom where the evidentiary hearing was held before U.S. District Court Judge Robert Mariani. Dozens more



Outside courtroom hearing for Mumia, Dec. 18.

supporters watched the proceedings in an overflow courtroom. Around 20 people maintained an all-day demonstration

outside in the cold, handing out fliers and explaining what was happening inside the court to residents of this economically depressed town.

Abu-Jamal testified via video hookup from SCI-Mahanoy, assisted by attorneys Ashley Henderson and Nikki Grant, of the Amistad Law Project. It was the first time Abu-Jamal has been able to speak in court on his own behalf in decades. In court Bret Grote, of the Abolitionist Law Center, questioned Abu-Jamal. Attorney Robert Boyle questioned Dr. Joseph Harris, who gave expert medical testimony, stating that most of Mumia's health problems can be linked to untreated acute hepatitis C, which is curable with new antiviral drugs.

Early in the day, Judge Mariani denied

a motion by Laura Neal, the DOC's legal counsel, requesting dismissal of the hearing. Neal claimed Abu-Jamal failed to exhaust all of the prison's grievance procedure requirements and that he hadn't specifically asked for HCV treatment in the grievance. The judge reminded Neal that the DOC had all of Abu-Jamal's health information in May of 2015 and called Neal's argument "a tortured view of what is required of an inmate in a grievance."

The hearing will continue on Dec. 22. It starts at 9:30 a.m. at the U.S. Courthouse located at 235 N. Washington Ave. in Scranton. For transportation information from Philadelphia, call 484-343-2172 or from New York, call 212-330-8029. □

Rev. Pinkney: 'I am still standing'

Emergency conference held for Mich. political prisoner

By **David Sole**
Detroit

As the Rev. Edward Pinkney approached the start of his second year in prison, a powerful show of support was displayed in Detroit on Dec. 12 for Michigan's political prisoner. The Emergency Conference to Save Rev. Pinkney drew over 70 participants from across Michigan and several other states. Longtime supporters of Rev. Pinkney were joined by many who had only recently heard about the jailed Benton Harbor civil rights activist. Many were meeting each other for the first time.

Dorothy Pinkney opened the conference. This is the second time in eight years that she has been separated from her spouse due to totally outrageous frame-up charges. She inspired the crowd by reading from Rev. Pinkney's message to the conference: "They tried to destroy me, but I am still standing. They attempted to silence me by taking away my telephone rights, but I am still standing. They tried to harass me, they tried to intimidate me, they tried to threaten me, but I am still standing."

Attorney Tim Holloway, Rev. Pinkney's appeals lawyer, exposed the wildly unconstitutional procedures used by the prosecutor, Michael Sepic, and allowed by Berrien County judge, Sterling R. Schrock, to get the all-white jury to convict Rev. Pinkney despite having, admittedly, "no evidence" linking him to the charges of altering five dates on a mayoral recall petition.

Longtime supporter and organizer Marcina Cole linked Rev. Pinkney's ordeal to the regime of racism, police misconduct and mass incarceration of African Americans across the country. A call to elevate the profile of Michigan's political prisoner in the media nationally and internationally was made by Abayomi Azikiwe, a leader of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition and the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice. He reported that radio shows had recently given substantial coverage to Rev. Pinkney in San Francisco, Milwaukee and Washington, D.C. The Final Call newspaper and CounterPunch online magazine have also given coverage to this case. Regular coverage of the struggle to free Rev. Pinkney is found in Workers World newspaper and



Dorothy Pinkney

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

the People's Tribune.

Send a greeting to Rev. Pinkney

A widespread campaign was launched to show support for Rev. Pinkney and let Marquette Prison officials know that they are being watched by many. People are being urged to send a holiday greeting card to Rev. Edward

Pinkney #294671, Marquette Branch Prison NE-93, 1960 U.S. Hwy. 41 South, Marquette, MI 49855. A table at the conference had dozens of holiday cards laid out so people could sign them or send a brief message on the spot.

An open microphone allowed widespread discussion. A woman who explained that she was a dues-paying member of Amnesty International let people know she was pressing the London headquarters of AI to take up Rev. Pinkney's case. Lamont Lilly from North Carolina, the Workers World Party candidate for vice president in the 2016 national elections, promised to raise Rev. Pinkney on the campaign trail as he travels the country. A young autoworker, Tom Michalak, reported on important trade union support coming for Rev. Pinkney. A taped message of support was shown from the Baltimore People's Power Assembly.

In the days following the conference, an important development emerged that may add to the efforts to keep Rev. Pinkney safe from vindictive and racist prison officials at the remote Marquette prison. Several Michigan state legislators, pressed by their constituents, have agreed to contact the Michigan Department of Corrections director to express their concern for the health and safety of Rev. Pinkney. They also have approached the legislative corrections ombudsman to ask him to look into the concerns that Rev. Pinkney has expressed about abusive treatment. It is hoped that such inquiries will, at the very least, make officials more cautious about how they treat this embattled political prisoner.

Calls to the Michigan legislative ombudsman, Keith Barber, expressing concern for Rev. Edward Pinkney, #294671 at Marquette Branch Prison, can be made to 517-373-8573. PayPal donations to help finance the defense of Rev. Pinkney can be made online at bhbanco.org.

San Francisco

People's power defeats new jail



PHOTO: NONEWSJAIL.FILES.WORDPRESS.COM

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to get around public opposition. Normally a bond issue is used to finance projects like the new jail, but that would have required a ballot measure that jail promoters knew they would lose.

Lisa Marie Alatorre, in a statement from the San Francisco Coalition on Homelessness, said, "We don't want jails that are newer and nicer. We want alternatives to imprisonment and permanent affordable housing, and for people locked inside to return to their communities. As we've shown today, we

will make this happen through our collective strength." (Dec. 15)

Kamau Walton, a member of Critical Resistance Oakland and Black Lives Matter Bay Area, emphasized, "[W]e reject the notion that Black residents' only way of accessing resources like mental healthcare is by criminalizing them, arresting them and locking them away." (sfbayview.com, Dec. 15)

Others supporting the campaign to stop the new jail included the Letter Carriers union, Teachers union, Tenants union and California Coalition for Women Prisoners. □

VW: UAW advances organizing in South

By Martha Grevatt

For decades, the United Auto Workers has been unable to organize a single non-union “transplant” — plants of Asian and European auto companies, most of them in the South. The game has now changed. On Dec. 4, the National Labor Relations Board announced that the UAW won the right to represent 164 skilled trades workers who repair and maintain equipment at the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tenn. The vote was 108-44 for the union.

In 2014, under a barrage of anti-union scare tactics, the UAW narrowly lost an NLRB-conducted representation election. A win would have been a huge boost to the union’s efforts to organize the transplants. The loss was particularly stunning given the neutrality agreement between the UAW and VW that should have made the election an easy win.

On the eve of the February 2014 election, U.S. Senator Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) dropped a bombshell, claiming that if the UAW won, VW would not build the next generation of SUVs in Chattanooga. Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam also campaigned against the union, along with anti-union worker groups funded by right-wingers like Grover Norquist. After the negative vote, VW confirmed that Corker’s claim was a lie.

This latest win, while significant,

leaves 89 percent of the hourly VW workforce — those who actually build the vehicles — outside of the collective bargaining process. Although the UAW claims a majority of VW workers as members, it has not filed for a plantwide election. Perhaps it fears it lacks enough of a majority to beat back another round of anti-union propaganda. Volkswagen recognizes the UAW as a “members-only” organization for those it signed up, but grants similar status to the American Council of Employees.

ACE is not a rival “anti-UAW union,” as it has been portrayed, but a union-busting formation funded by the same forces that promoted the “no” vote last year. In many ways ACE functions like a classic company-funded union — now illegal under the National Labor Relations Act. It differs in that it is not funded by VW itself but by elements of the capitalist class whose political agenda is to keep the U.S. South — where union density is the sparsest — a low-wage, union-free haven for corporations. Corker, Norquist and company are the political heirs of the racist Dixiecrats, who hated unions because they empower the Black working class.

What happened to VW’s ‘neutrality’?

Volkswagen shed its pretense of neutrality with this second election. The company filed an appeal with the NLRB,

arguing that the union has no legal right to represent only a sector of its workforce. The company’s case is weak, especially considering a recent board ruling that a union could represent “micro-units” within a company. Consider the airline industry, where there are different unions for pilots, mechanics, flight attendants and ticket agents; at some airlines only one or two of these subgroups are organized.

It’s important to note that a drawn-out legal battle with the company would create a burden for the UAW regardless of the outcome.

The company also refused to recognize the UAW on the basis of “card check” — where a union presents proof that a majority of employees have signed union authorization cards. Moreover, VW has yet to honor an agreement it made to bargain with the UAW as a members-only union to set wages, benefits, and other terms and conditions for VW workers who are in the union. Management now seems to be of the same mind as Corker in relation to the UAW.

What has changed? For one, the UAW contracts with Ford, General Motors and Fiat Chrysler raised wages substantially. While the contracts did not fully eliminate two-tier wages and benefits, the top pay — which for second-tier workers had been lower under the old contract than

the hourly wage at VW — is now about \$8 an hour more than at the Chattanooga plant. A UAW-represented workforce at VW would aspire to achieve wage parity with the Detroit Three.

The company, especially now, is in no mood to raise wages. Its current diesel emissions scandal will cost VW an estimated \$10 billion in repair costs, as well as fines and legal costs. The workers, however, need a union desperately, and not just for better wages. Plant management is demanding workers be hyper-productive, and this is causing a rise in injuries and job-related stress.

Yet the UAW has not dropped its push for a German-style works council built around the class-collaborationist concept of “co-determination.” The resolution that came out of the UAW’s March Special Bargaining Convention seeks to expand the model beyond Volkswagen.

However, the UAW cannot rely on VW’s professed neutrality. Now is the time to build on the win among the skilled trades and organize the production workers.

Southern workers need the labor movement. The labor movement needs the South. Class-struggle unionism in the tradition of the 1937 Flint sit-down strike and the 1968 Memphis sanitation strike is the only way forward.

Grevatt is a 28-year Chrysler worker and UAW member.

UAW local see gains in Kohler strike

By Workers World Milwaukee Bureau

After a 32-day strike against the Kohler Co., on Dec. 16, the fighting members of United Auto Workers Local 833 voted 91 percent in favor accepting a four-year tentative contract agreement. They returned to work the next day.

“We worked very hard to reach an agreement that addresses all of the key areas crucial to the future of our members,” said Tim Tayloe, Local 833 president in a UAW press release. Tayloe said the agreement would “significantly” close the wage gap between newer and older hires, “while also providing substantial wage increases in each year of the contract.”

Inspiring the entire labor movement and community struggles, members of Local 833 — in a climate of severe union-busting austerity in Wisconsin and nationwide — went on strike Nov. 15 after voting by a margin of 94 percent to reject a tentative contract offer from Kohler that kept a two-tier system in place, with “Tier B” workers making on average \$10 an hour less than “Tier A” workers. Health care costs were also a major strike issue.

Although the tentative agreement didn’t eliminate two-tier entirely, advances towards wage equality will be made during the life of the contract.

Labor-community solidarity

Anticipating a strike vote, labor and community supporters started mobilizing solidarity actions for their Local 833 sisters and brothers the day before the vote.

During the strike, ongoing support kept spirits up and the union hall in operation 24/7. Numerous small businesses assisted the strikers in a variety of ways and unions from around the United States and beyond, along with a variety of student and community organizations, lent dynamic support. Numerous solidarity resolutions came from unions



Members of Rockford Fight Imperialism, Stand Together join striking UAW Local 833 members at the Kohler Co., Dec. 14.

such as the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 526 in Milwaukee, the United Steelworkers Local 8751 in Boston, the Autoworkers Caravan and the School of the Americas Watch Labor Caucus.

Food and kids’ toy drives for striking members and their families were organized by a variety of union and community organizations, including the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association, the United Worker Organization, the Wisconsin AFL-CIO and the Wisconsin Education Association Council. Tens of thousands of dollars were sent by many unions to Local 833’s strike fund.

Babette Grunow of the Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement participated in a “Youth Empowered in the Struggle” solidarity delegation from Milwaukee to the strike picket lines on Dec. 5. She returned with another delegation, this time of Rockford “Fight Imperialism, Stand Together” and Workers World Party members Dec. 13-14. Grunow also helped to mobilize support from Milwaukee and circulated strike support information through social media.

Grunow told WW, “It has been inspiring seeing all the support for Local 833. As we talked to the members they

have been expressing their thanks for the solidarity. It’s an uplifting experience. The workers are well organized and are a good example for other unions.”

For more information and how to support Local 833: facebook.com/Local833;

Babette Grunow of Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement at the UAW Local 833 Emil Mazey Hall with striker, Dec. 13.



cal833local; facebook.com/defeatright-towork; wibailoutpeople.org and facebook.com/wisafclcio

Taxi drivers demand a living

Hundreds of Philadelphia taxi and limousine drivers blocked traffic around City Hall and snarled Center City traffic for an hour and a half as they honked their horns Dec. 16. They were protesting the failure of city officials to properly enforce licensing and insurance laws against UberX and Lyft drivers, allowing those illegally unregulated businesses to undermine the ability of taxi drivers to make a living. They were demanding “no more apathy from our public officials” and “a roundtable meeting on the record” with the district



attorney, current Mayor Michael Nutter, incoming Mayor Jim Kenny and other officials. The protest was organized by a coalition of UberBLACK drivers, taxicab drivers, and other members of the taxi and limousine industry.

— Photo and caption by Joe Piette

At University of Missouri

Right-wing politician attacks anti-racist athletes

By Danielle Boachie

The University of Missouri has been a battleground for the struggle against racism, oppression and underrepresentation on college campuses. This came to national and international attention in early November. After a series of racist attacks — including hate speech and vandalism — went unanswered by the school's administration, a vibrant Black student movement arose to fight against white supremacy at Mizzou.

Students demanded that the university president, Tim Wolfe, resign or be fired due to his negligence in responding to the racist terror that students were facing on campus. The hashtag #ConcernedStudent1950 was used by students to draw powerful connections between the year that the first Black graduate student, Gus T. Ridgel, was admitted to the university, and the concerns and needs of every Black student at Mizzou since then.

As Black students continued to face a marginalization that is deeply rooted in the racism found in predominantly white institutions, their strength and determination manifested in various ways. From protests to a hunger strike by Jonathan Butler, a 25-year-old African-American graduate student, to the announcement of the Missouri Tigers football team that they would boycott the remainder of the season until Wolfe was terminated, Miz-



Mizzou football team lock arms in show of solidarity in November.

zou students proved that they were dedicated to combating systems of oppression on their campus.

While all the connected student organizing that took place at the university should be applauded, it is necessary to note the particular weight of the players' act of resistance. Universities and athletic conferences bring in billions of dollars annually, primarily from the unpaid labor of student athletes, an issue which was the subject of national debate earlier this year when the Northwestern University football players attempted to organize into a union. By withholding their labor, the Mizzou football team drew on the most powerful weapon the working class has at its disposal: the strike. The players took a huge risk, endangering their future careers as students and athletes, but it paid off: Within just 36 hours of the player's announcement of their

strike, President Wolfe resigned.

In direct retaliation to the courageous action of the football team, Missouri state Rep. Rick Brattin co-sponsored a now withdrawn bill that would have penalized the players for their actions to bring awareness to racism on campus and demand accountability from the university administration. House Bill 1743 threatened the freedom of speech of the players, including the right to protest and boycott, for it specifically stated that "any scholarship athlete who refuses to play for a reason unrelated to health, shall have his or her scholarship revoked." (Edge of Sports, Dec. 15)

Yet, this bill was more than just an infringement on the player's right to organize. Though the university's student body is only 8 percent Black, 69 percent of the athletes are Black. This bill — a legislative version of the reactionary sen-

timent, "Shut up and play" — is a direct attack on the personhood of these Black students. Though the bill was withdrawn, it is a clear indication of the ruling-class agenda that Missouri's legislature was so eager to rule out college athletics as an arena of class struggle. Similarly, the Northwestern players were ultimately denied the right to form a union by the National Labor Relations Board in August.

In defense of HB 1743, Brattin stated, "I sincerely believe students should be able to express their viewpoints, but I also believe our flagship state university has to keep and maintain the order that is expected from such an esteemed educational institution." (Huffington Post, Dec. 16) Brattin's sentiments reek of the oppressive respectability politicians often use to police Black voices. His need for "institutional order" mirrors the historic repression of Black resistance at the expense of our personhood. His "sincere" care concerning Black self-expression is limited to what fits the confines of systematic silencing and erasure.

While we celebrate the victory of Wolfe's resignation and the withdrawal of the bill, we must not forget that it will take protracted struggle to fight against racist terrorism on college campuses and to also recognize that student athletes are superexploited, and deserving of a living wage and union, like all workers. The struggles are inextricably linked. □

Federal Reserve rate hikes: What impact for workers?

By G. Dunkel

Major decisions about the economy are often buried on the financial pages with news about business shenanigans, corruption, mergers and acquisitions — news that doesn't directly affect workers unless they work for the corporations involved.

But a decision by the Open Market Committee of the Federal Reserve System to raise the basic interest rate on short-term loans, for the first time in nearly 10 years, could have a major impact on workers. More significant than the size of the increase announced on Dec. 16, which is just a quarter of 1 percent, is the promise of future increases.

The Federal Reserve Bank's charter proclaims it has two priorities in managing the U.S. money supply: keeping inflation manageably low and promoting employment.

The real priority of this institution, however, is to guarantee that the big private U.S. banks continue to dominate the economy and get the lion's share of the profits. This was apparent after the 2007-08 crisis, when the Fed poured \$29 trillion into bailing out these and other institutions that they declared were "too big to fail," while millions of homeowners lost everything. (Levy Economics Institute, December 2011)

"Official" inflation is so low in the United States that the Social Security Administration is justifying its decision that the 56 million people receiving benefits — 36 million retirees plus dependents, surviving spouses and people with disabilities — will get no cost-of-living increase in 2016. They unfairly decided this even though people on a low income trying to buy food and medical care while paying rent or a mortgage know their living expenses have indeed gone up.

According to Fed Chair Janet Yellen,

the emphasis is on "normalizing" monetary policy. Yellen's assumption is that the economy has improved, inflation is on target, and employment is getting stronger.

But the latest report of the Bureau of Economic Analysis, part of the Commerce Department, puts the inflation rate of Personal Consumption Expenses — which the Fed says it prefers to use — at 1.5 percent, far below the Fed's target. The real unemployment rate, taking into account discouraged workers, is around 13 percent. A lot of economic analysts allege unemployed workers now dependent on disability checks might also seek jobs if they were available. Wages have stagnated for more than a decade, basically due to high unemployment.

Not all pro-capitalist economists agree with the Fed's decision. The Economic Policy Institute's Josh Bivens said: "Today's actions are a worrisome backwards step. Despite years of steady progress restoring the damage inflicted by the Great Recession, a full economic recovery remains incomplete. ... The potential benefits to holding off on further rate increases and allowing further improvements in unemployment are enormous: greater work opportunities for millions of Americans and higher wages for tens of millions more." (epi.org, Dec. 16)

Bivens emphasized that inflation is well below the target, the U.S. economy is certainly not at full employment, and the wages of workers have not recovered, although corporate profits have.

Threat of deflation

Deflation is a general fall in prices, sometimes called negative inflation. One of its hallmarks for workers is a cut in wages, often drastic. It is accompanied by growth in unemployment.

Prices have fallen in Greece, for exam-

ple, for the last 33 months, and wages, which often go unpaid, have fallen by 30 percent to 40 percent. Greece is the only country in Europe where the minimum wage fell between 2008 and 2015.

Behind deflation in the U.S. and worldwide is capitalist overproduction. The drop in production causes falling commodity prices for raw materials, especially oil, but also metals like gold, copper and nickel, as well as products like coffee, cotton and cocoa.

The Wall Street Journal in its Dec. 18 issue addresses the threat of deflation in the U.S. by pointing out that even though the Fed hiked interest rates, driving up the costs for banks that needed short-term funds, "broader market forces conspired to drive other U.S. interest rates down."

Banks have not raised the interest they pay depositors, though they have indeed hiked the rate they charge borrowers.

'We shall not be moved!'

Across the street from Gracie Mansion, New York Mayor William de Blasio's home, were hundreds of demonstrators on Dec. 16. Led by the Coalition to Protect Chinatown and the



New York City

ciple of affordable housing for all.

Speakers, besides those from Chinatown, included Black

and Latino/a organizers from Brooklyn and the Bronx. They encouraged plans for unity and solidarity, as all of us have the same community needs. Demands were raised in different languages, along with chants against discrimination and displacement. Class consciousness grows as forces unite and make follow-up action plans, including another protest at the mayor's home. The final chant for the evening was "We shall not be moved!"

— Photo and caption by Anne Pruden

People pack court as Sandra Bland's family seeks justice

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

"Sandra Bland, Say Her Name!" rang out in downtown Houston on Dec. 17 as hundreds of African-American activists and their supporters rallied, marched, drummed and chanted. Two hours later they packed the courtroom for a status hearing on the federal civil rights lawsuit filed by Sandra Bland's family.

Bland was found dead in a Waller County jail cell last July 13, three days after being arrested for failing to signal a lane change. Led by the National Black United Front, the protesters demanded answers and decried that a Waller County grand jury had only met twice since Bland's death six months ago.

"We demand answers, not a cover-up," said Kofi Taharka, the national chair of NBUF. Other activists were with the New Black Panther Party, Out of the Flames of Ferguson, the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, the National of Islam, Justice or Else, as well as many youth with the Black Lives Matter movement.

Bland's death just 60 miles from Houston added fuel to the anger and outrage burning in Black communities in Texas and around the country where police murders of unarmed Blacks and Latinos/as happen so often that activists struggle to fight all the injustices.

Geneva Reed-Veal, Bland's mother, and Sandra Bland's estate filed a wrongful death suit last August against the so-called Texas Department of Public Safety, arresting DPS Officer Brian Encinia, Waller County and county jail staffers Elsa Magnus and Oscar Prudente.

According to the Mapping Police Violence website, over 321 African Americans have been killed by police in 2015, and one-third of them were unarmed.

Texas and county officials have declared Bland's death a suicide by hanging. Bland family lawyers say that as of now the cause of death is undetermined. No evidence has been revealed to them, including the plastic bag that Bland allegedly used to hang herself. And if any fingerprints were taken off the bag, they



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC
Sandra Bland's family, attorney and protesters outside of hearing, Dec. 18.

have not been made public.

Houston activists were joined by people from around the state for the first hearing in the Bland family's civil rights suit. Unlike the usually massive courtrooms in the federal courthouse, a small room was the venue for this hearing, so only around 80 people could cram inside to hear the hour-long proceedings. Another 100 people stood outside in the hallway, straining to hear. Security was oppressively tight, and many people left rather than be subjected to it.

'Pry the truth loose'

U.S. District Judge David Hittner presided over the hearing and set jury selection for the trial for Jan. 23, 2017. He ruled that all discovery in the case must be completed by Sept. 30, 2016.

Hannah Adair Bonner is the curator of The Shout: a spoken-word, poetry-focused, "activism" movement seeking to nurture a community of multi-ethnic, multigenerational, justice-seeking, solidarity-building people. She serves on the staff of St. John's Downtown in Houston and has been working on the case daily

since Bland's death.

In her blog at soulunbound.com, Bonner chronicled the hearing, saying in part: "Let me know if I need to pry it loose," Judge David Hittner said at the status hearing for the Civil Trial brought by the family of Sandra Bland. 'Pry it loose.' It must have been the third time at least that he used that particular combination of words in his remarks that day."

Bonner continued: "As the proceedings ended, it was clear that at least for today, whatever the defense for the State and County had behind their back, they were not going to show it any time soon.

"Judge David Hittner made it clear, however, that he did plan to pry those fingers loose. So dates were set for the coming year for Summary Judgement, for the Ranger report, for expert witnesses, for the end of motions, for the end of discovery, and for the end of introducing new parties."

After the hearing ended, Bland's

mother, two sisters and the attorneys spoke to well over 100 supporters, who had begun another demonstration outside. Attorney Cannon Lambert Sr. said the legal team was grateful that the judge wants to have full disclosure.

Reed-Veal told the crowd that it was still so difficult for the family to even speak about Bland, but "I want you to know that Sandra Bland was more than a hashtag and we will continue fighting for justice for her."

As the anger of people around the U.S. builds over one police killing after another, one thing is noticeably missing: a federal record of just how many people die in police custody each year.

What we do know in Texas is that a young, educated, articulate Black woman with an understanding of the racism in Waller County died in its jail. Bland graduated from Prairie View A & M University, a historically Black university in Waller County, and had come back to begin a new job at the university. She had a lot to live for. Now she is dead, and her family and the community at large are determined to find out the truth. □

Struggle goes on Justice for Dontre Hamilton



U.S. Department of Justice officials, along with Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and Police Chief Edward Flynn, held a press conference that members of the public were barred from attending. They jointly announced what they say is a two-year "examination" of the Milwaukee Police Department's policies, training and practices during a "collaborative reform initiative" with federal officials.

The Coalition for Justice in Milwaukee held a press conference at the federal courthouse on Dec. 17 to demand justice for Dontre Hamilton and all other victims of police terror. A wide variety of labor and community forces participated.

Dontre Hamilton, a 31-year-old Black man, was fatally shot 14 times at Red Arrow Park in Milwaukee by Christopher Manney, a white Milwaukee police officer, on April 30, 2014. Manney, who was fired, has not been charged with Hamilton's murder.

That day inside the federal courthouse,

At the COJ press conference, members of the Hamilton family and others announced the coalition's demands of the Milwaukee police department, whose officers are guilty of numerous murders of mostly Black and Brown people and thousands of atrocities, such as public "strip searches," in just the past few years.

For more information and how to support the COJ: facebook.com/justicefordontre.

— Report and photo by Workers World Milwaukee Bureau



PHOTO: YASHI MORI
A Dec. 10 solidarity protest in front of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) headquarters in Washington, DC, demands the release of all hunger-striking detained immigrants.



PHOTO: WILLIAM THORNTON
Protesters rally in solidarity with hunger-striking on Nov. 30 at Alabama's Etowah County Detention Center, where immigrants are imprisoned.

Jailed women forge

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Women prisoners in the Yuba County Jail in Marysville, Calif., are on hunger strike in solidarity with detained immigrants. In the first such unified prisoner action in the U.S., women in criminal custody are fasting in solidarity with women in immigration custody. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) rents space in the Yuba County Jail to incarcerate undocumented immigrants. (San Francisco Bay View, Dec. 16)

The Yuba County Jail strike is in support of Rajashree Roy, an immigrant detainee facing deportation to Fiji, where she has not lived since she was eight. Roy has been detained for over a year. She is allowed to see her children only through plexiglass walls.

The women in criminal custody who are hunger striking in solidarity with Roy are Jessica Bullock, Tisha Sartor, Kyra Beckles, Juanita Thomas and Ana Marquez.

Anoop Prasad, a lawyer with Asian Americans Advancing Justice who is representing Roy, said, "What's happening in Yuba County is historic and unprecedented. ... In terms of people physically putting their bodies on the line [together], this is the first time." (tinyurl.com/q7c9w96)

The Yuba County women released this

Baltimore activists decry hung jury for killer cop

Baltimore activists erupted in anger Dec. 16 when they heard that the jury was hung in the case of William Porter, the first of six police officers who are charged in the death of Freddie Gray. The Peoples Power Assembly staged daily protests both early in the morning and in the evenings throughout the trial. The decision to retry Porter and when is still to be determined. The next trial begins in early January.

The Rev. C.D. Witherspoon, president of the Baltimore chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and an organizer with the Peoples Power Assembly, declared early on that the people want indictments and jail time for all six police officers. He also pointed out the larger problem of structural racism, not only in the police department but in the conditions that most people who live in the city suffer under.

The city has been in virtual lockdown with squads of tactical and riot police stationed throughout Baltimore's various communities. Baltimore School Board CEO Gregory Thornton sent a letter out to all public school students threatening them against protesting. Helicopters were on patrol and the sheriff's office de-



Dec. 16, Baltimore.

WW PHOTO: DAVID CARD

ployed SWAT teams and phalanxes of police around demonstrators at the courthouse. Two activists were arrested, Kwame Rose, a local Baltimore activist, and a 16-year-old high school student.

— Baltimore WW Bureau



Baltimore youth answer schools CEO, say 'No police terror'

Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), a group of young revolutionaries struggling for justice in Baltimore and around the country, condemns the hypocritical letter from Baltimore Public Schools CEO Gregory Thornton.

This letter makes repeated allusions to the safety of students while threatening consequences to anyone who would take part in protests resulting from an acquittal of the officer who murdered Freddie Gray. If the school system truly cared about the safety of students, they would be doing everything in their power to work to end the epidemic of police

violence in Baltimore City. Inside the schools themselves, the police have a record of harassment and abuse of students that far outweighs any possible benefit from their presence. We demand the removal of all police officers from our schools!

Thornton's letter talks about "appropriate ways to express dissent" and how "we need to make it clear ... student walkouts, vandalism, civil disorder, and any other form of violence are not acceptable ... and students who participate in such behaviors will face consequences." This threat against the youth who want to

fight for an end to police violence is disgraceful. The only reason the cops were even charged was because of the heroic actions of the students who rebelled and fought back against the police, demanding that this time be different. We cannot allow these threats to divide our movement. What is needed now is unity and determination in the face of further repression by the police. We stand with everyone who fought in the rebellion!

We in FIST believe that the police are not our friends; there is no such thing as good cops. They are the frontline armed troops of this racist, sexist, homophobic

and anti-working class system called capitalism. They exist primarily to protect the property of the rich and to keep the rest of us "in line." We believe that the police must be immediately forced under complete democratic community control before their eventual total abolishment. The people, and especially youth, need jobs and education, not police terror. We urge the youth of Baltimore to join us in the streets and continue the struggle to overturn this rotten system! Check us out at Facebook.com/BmoreFIST or call 410-914-8280. □

solidarity with detained immigrants

statement: "We are locked up together and refuse to be divided into immigrants and citizens. None of us belong in this cage separated from our families. We join the brave immigrant hunger strikers across the country in fasting to force recognition of our humanity." (San Francisco Bay View, Dec. 16)

Their strike began Dec. 14 before dawn as an extension of the #FreedomGiving hunger strikes launched during the U.S. "Thanksgiving" holiday. Hundreds of South Asian, African and Latino/a detainees participated in hunger strikes in seven ICE detainee centers from California to Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Georgia and Alabama.

ASPIRE, a pan-Asian, undocumented youth-led group, announced its members

would gather outside the Yuba County Jail to fast in solidarity with the women. ASPIRE is calling for an end to violence faced by Asian and Pacific Island communities, as well as "an end to the unjust policing and the criminalization of all communities of color." (tinyurl.com/hx3qjdn)

A solidarity demonstration with immigrant hunger strikers was held Nov. 30 outside Alabama's Etowah County Detention Center. The rally supported those refusing food "to denounce the inhumane treatment they endure in these facilities where their human dignity is ignored by the ICE agenda and immigration detention system." The Etowah facility leases prison space to ICE. (facebook.com/shutdownetowah)

The #FreedomGiving strikers have released this list of demands: "End to all

detentions and deportations. End to the ICE detention bed quotas. End to indefinite detention: Release on parole or supervision for all asylum seekers held for more than 6 months. Improved conditions in detention (discipline, food, clothing, access to phones, medical access)." (notonmoredeportation.com)

"Bed quotas" refers to an obscure Homeland Security policy requiring ICE to keep an average of 34,000 detainees per day in custody. The quota guarantees a constant stream of money to counties that rent public jail space to ICE. (Washington Post, Oct. 13, 2013)

Throughout the U.S., detainees report ICE is attempting to end their hunger strike through torture tactics ranging from sleep deprivation and solitary con-

finement to forced catheterization. Some hunger strikers in the Etowah jail were coerced to eat after a federal judge ordered them force-fed. (Al.com)

One Etowah striker, Mahbubar Rahman, said: "When we started this hunger strike, we thought this was only our problem. But when we heard so many other centers also joined the hunger strike, we realized that detention is a national problem. We started to shake the walls of these prisons." (tinyurl.com/gnjw59t/)

For information on sending support messages to the Yuba County Jail striking women, go to tinyurl.com/gtnbg5y.

You can support the #FreedomGiving strikers by signing their petition: tinyurl.com/qdhre4w □

Clarence Moses El's 28-year quest for justice

By Larry Hales

Based on a talk given at a Workers World Party meeting in New York City, Dec. 18.

Time cannot be returned to you, so how can 28 lost years ever be made up? How can you quantify such a long time into a material sum? The emotional damage and psychic trauma, the familial losses and funerals missed, the milestones passed by — birthdays, holidays, graduations, etc., all missed. Twenty eight years is a long time.

But to be locked in a dungeon, with no freedom of movement, without the tenderness of loved ones, without being able to freely pass under the sun or night sky, and to lose 28 years. Every day behind a set of bars or large steel doors, to have to listen to the same clanging locking mechanisms, with the days moving at a quarter of the speed, living a torturous half life is nothing short of maddening.

Imagine being under the above circumstances, having been arrested in front of your three-year-old son, charged, tried, convicted and sentenced without having been responsible for the crime. Imagine that the image of you being placed under arrest after a bike ride with your three-year-old would most likely stick with the young boy as he grew into a young man, away from you, without your loving parental guidance.

This is what life has been like for Clarence Moses El since he was convicted in Denver in 1988 because of a premonition,



Clarence Moses El locked up for 28 years on the basis of a premonition.

despite there being no other evidence attributed to the act. It was a brutal assault and rape of a victim who initially said three names — L.C., Earl and Darnell — of men whom she thought may have attacked and raped her. None of the three was ever arrested or interviewed. But Moses El was arrested shortly after the victim claimed to see his face in “a dream” she had a few days afterwards.

Semen was analyzed, but it was not a match to Clarence's and should have ruled him out. It was more of a match to L.C. Jackson's. However, the DNA evidence was stored, as the science was new and not very frequently used, not by the prosecution or defense.

When Clarence Moses El, through Barry Scheck's Innocence Project, won a court order to have the DNA evidence tested, the material, stored in a box marked “Do Not Destroy,” was tossed into a trash bin.

This would be one of many callous,

criminal acts committed by Denver officials that in a just society would lead to an investigation — not only of the police department that was responsible for maintaining and storing the evidence, but of the District Attorney's office that refused to retry the case after the destruction of the evidence. There was later the conviction of L.C. Jackson for another rape (though he was the first person mentioned by the victim), and for failing to reopen the case after L.C. Jackson, in late 2013, confessed to the attack on the victim. The DA's office even tried to suppress the confession by L.C. Jackson and intimidate him into changing his statement.

Free him now!

Now the entire unbelievable and unfortunate torture of Clarence Moses El, the interminable 28 years in cells, appears to be coming to an end. On Dec. 14, Denver District Judge Kandace Gerdes finally — months after an evidentiary hearing where L.C. Jackson's statement was entered into evidence along with new blood evidence — vacated the original conviction and ordered a new trial.

It is difficult to call this decision “justice,” not after so much time and loss. Imagine this were you and these years were taken, a moment at a time, taken while you sat, stowed away, surrounded

by clanging locks, large metal doors and concrete, looking at the same colors and walls, and you are innocent. You live with the innocence, professing to it, believing in it, holding it. It is the blanket you pull up to your chin at night, and you fight so that your hope and struggle for freedom to live at full speed, to touch the people you love are no longer a dream.

What if this were you? It has been Clarence Moses El's reality, a living nightmare for 28 years.

It is finally coming to a close, hopefully, for the case still needs to be dropped, and there is always the threat that the DA's office will appeal the judge's decision and push forward with a trial with no damning evidence other than a “premonition” — though there is a heavier amount of material evidence pointing to Moses El's innocence.

While Clarence and his family wait in limbo for this decision to be made, it is important that people of conscience call the DA's office and demand that the case be dropped, that this sick farce be ended, that this 60-year-old man be allowed to walk free and return to his family.

Twenty eight years. While not justice, this is a victory, a partial victory that will be complete when Clarence is free without the threat of another trial hanging over his head and when the state of Colorado pays for the years they took away from an innocent man.

Call or email DA Mitch Morrissey at 720-913-9000 or info@denverda.org and tell him to drop the case against Clarence Moses El. □

CHICAGO

Activists remember Hampton assassination

By Eric Struch
Chicago

This year's International Revolutionary Day, commemorating the 46th anniversary of the martyrdom of Black Panther Party Chairman Fred Hampton by the police, was by far the biggest since Workers World newspaper started covering the event in 2006.

Chairman Fred Jr., the son of Comrade Mother Akua Njeri and the martyred revolutionary liberation fighter, opened IRD 2015 at ground zero, the site of the racist, repressive bloodshed, with these words:

“December 4th, we acknowledge what happened here, 46 years ago. It was one of our September 11th stories. We say every day in our communities is like a September 11th. And this day, the United States government, they snatched our twin towers, 21-year-old Chairman Fred and 22-year-old Defense Captain Mark Clark.

“We out here like clockwork. I was just in a position here where we don't forget nor forgive. And not to talk about this in some abstract sort of way, but to draw the concrete connections of the rampant police terrorism, in fact, the protocol of

police terrorism that we were subjected to even prior to December 4th, 1969. But that case in particular was, in a sense, like bringing the pus out of the sore, heightening the contradictions.

“In so many cases, as Malcolm X stated, there's a façade of freedom, and this system, United States imperialism, is so Machiavellian with its tactics, it puts us in a situation, like Harriet Tubman used to say, where she freed thousands of slaves, and she would've freed thousands more if they had only known they were slaves. In so many situations, we dismiss the attacks on our community with euphemisms such as ‘correctional sentence’ and even such as ‘police brutality.’

“There can never be a total tally or count of how many of our people have been snatched up, sent to the graveyards or the concentration camps, directly or indirectly, by the state. And this is something we're going to touch on, about the impacts of imperialism. You know, a lot of the times I speak, people say, ‘here comes Chairman Fred Hampton Jr., he's always blaming the white man and the government.’” (pauses) “And we do. We do.” (laughter from crowd)

'Power to the people, Black Panthers!'

Chairman Fred Jr. and the “Prisoners of Conscience Committee/Black Panther Party Cubs” did an outstanding job of making the event happen. A busload of about 30 young Black men from the New Era organization arrived from Detroit and made a powerful entrance into the memorial.

One of the founding members of the Black Disciples organization pledged his allegiance to the POCC/BPPC. Alongside him stood a representative of the Gangster Disciples organization. There was a representative from NCOBRA [The National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America], a revolutionary nationalist organization advocating reparations, as well as many other organizations.

Revolutionary Black Panther Party veterans spoke about their memories of the party and the terrorist police death squad that carried out Chairman Fred's assassination under the cover of darkness on the morning of Dec. 4, 1969.

Comrade Mother Akua Njeri described in detail the harrowing events of that morning, but she also had fond recollections of that era. She said: “I want to invite all y'all into my home right here. ... Y'all call it Chairman Fred Hampton Way now. That's the name of it. But it was West Monroe then. Chairman Fred sent me out to find a place for us to live that was close to the office. There was an open lot right here. You could walk straight through to the Panther office at 2350 W. Madison. There was a lot with abandoned cars.



Black Panther Party Chairman Fred Hampton

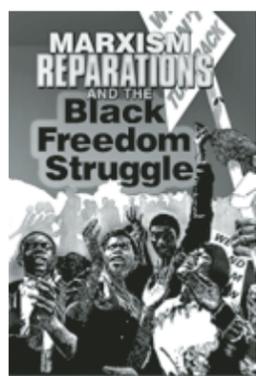
Homeless people used to congregate in there. Sometimes in that lot, they had little boxing matches and carrying on in there, but you could come through there, and they was like, ‘Power to the people, Black Panthers! Power to the people, Black Panthers!’”

Chairman Fred Jr. spoke about his experiences as a political prisoner and the state's involvement in violence in the Black neocolony. Solidarity statements were read from individuals and organizations from all over North America and from as far away as Venezuela. After a visit to the mural of Chairman Fred Sr. by the Rebel Diaz Arts Collective at The Wall at Madison and California, the program continued at a venue in Bronzeville on the South Side.

It is of the utmost importance to support the Black national liberation movement at this crucial time of escalating state and allied fascist violence against the oppressed Black nation, especially the youth.

The POCC/BPPC has extended its reach across North America, working with Black Panther Party veterans and revolutionary Black youth from Oakland to Detroit and has made contact with revolutionaries from Venezuela to the Secwepemc nation. Because of this growth, Chairman Fred Jr. and the POCC/BPPC are trying to purchase a building in Chicago so they can open an office. Chairman Fred Jr. has started a GoFundMe account to raise the money. Donations can be made at gofundme.com/blackpanthercubs.

Long live Chairman Fred! All power to the people!! Free 'em all!!! □



MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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 Available at major online book sellers and other bookstores.

Rival regimes in Libya sign agreement paving way for NATO troop intervention

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Two regimes claiming to be the legitimate government of the embattled North African state of Libya agreed to sign a unity accord at the aegis of the United Nations on Dec. 16.

Martin Kobler, the latest U.N. envoy to the country, which was destroyed after Washington engineered a war of regime-change in 2011, announced the agreement. Kobler is a German career diplomat who was involved in the imperialist wars in Iraq and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Whether the unity accord holds depends on many factors. Dozens of other militias and political interests were not party to the talks, including supporters of the former government of Col. Moammar Gadhafi, who was killed at the conclusion of the Pentagon- and NATO-led bombing campaign of March-October 2011.

Beginning on Dec. 17, fighting erupted in the eastern city of Ajdabiya, where 14 people were reported killed and 25 wounded. The clashes took place between members of the so-called Libyan National Army and not clearly identified armed groups.

Islamic State's expansion

Some analysts say that the Islamic State group could be moving into this area as a result of the existing political vacuum. The I.S. has established a base in Sirte, the former home of Gadhafi, who was brutally assassinated on Oct. 20, 2011, during the regime-change war. Sirte, the founding location of the continental organization, the African Union, is west of Ajdabiya.

At present I.S. reportedly controls a 150 mile-wide territory along the Mediterranean coast of Libya, with the city of Sirte as its headquarters. Some articles suggest that the I.S. leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, is currently residing in Sirte. On Dec. 11, I.S. seized control of

the ancient Roman ruins at Sabratha, 30 miles to the west of the Libyan capital of Tripoli.

The Barack Obama administration now calls I.S. its principal enemy internationally. The organization was founded and expanded in Iraq during the period following U.S. withdrawal of troops and then during the imperialist war of regime-change aimed at the Bashar al-Asad government in Syria.

I.S. commands substantial resources, including transport trucks and banks, and controls areas of oil production and distribution in both Iraq and Syria. Its military infrastructure in Syria, however, has been severely damaged where its oil supply lines have been disrupted as a result of the aerial campaign launched by the Russian Federation.

According to an article on international affairs written by Joseph Micallef and published in the Dec 19 Huffington Post, "Libya has always figured prominently in the Islamic State's expansion plans. The first three foreign provinces of Islamic State were all in Libya. On Nov. 13, 2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced the creation of three new Islamic State wilayats, or provinces, in Libya (Wilayat al-Barqah, Wilayat al-Tarabulus and Wilayat al-Fizan). The three wilayats corresponded to the three historic regions of Libya (Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan). In recent weeks there have been indications that the Libyan city of Sirte would become the new capital of the Islamic State should Raqqa fall to anti-Islamic State forces."

I.S. build-up coincides with imperialists' occupation plans

Coinciding with the U.N.-sponsored, largely forced agreement in Libya was the announcement of the planned deployment of a 6,000-person military force commanded ostensibly by Italy, which was the colonial power in Libya before World War II.

Britain has stated it will supply 1,000

troops for this operation. France has deployed 3,500 troops to a new base just 45 miles from the southern border with Libya. French imperialism opened the air war against Libya in 2011, and all three imperialist states participated in it and the blockade. France's government used the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris that killed 130 people as a pretext for entering the current bombing campaign in Syria.

Since the Pentagon- and NATO-led war of regime-change in 2011, oil production in Libya has declined from approximately 1.5 million barrels a day down to 350,000 to 400,000 at present.

The British-based Guardian newspaper reported on Dec. 19, "Western officials are scrambling to get authorization for Libyan airstrikes in the coming days before Islamic State captures the strategically important town of Ajdabiya, gateway to the country's oil wealth. Fierce fighting is raging in the town, which sits on a rocky plateau dominating the eastern oil ports. Its capture will give Isis command of the Sirte basin, home to Libya's largest collection of oilfields.

"British, American and French jets are on standby for strikes from bases across the Mediterranean, with drones and reconnaissance planes already in the air. U.S. special forces are in the Libyan desert, with one unit inadvertently photographed at the western Wattiya air base last week."

U.S. special forces entered the country quietly, but were exposed by the Libyan air force in a Facebook posting on Dec. 17. There were reports that one 20-member unit was chased away by a local militia.

Illustrating the urgent character of imperialist policy toward Libya, the Guardian article also reports, "A vast armada of aircraft is on standby. [U.S.] American F-15s, which bombed an al-Qaida gathering in [Ajdabiya] in July, are at bases in Italy. RAF Typhoons and Tornados based in Cyprus, detailed for Syria bombing, can be switched south with the use of mid-air refueling tankers. French reconnaissance planes are making passes over

[I.S.] bases and U.S. special forces are criss-crossing the region."

In a press Dec. 18 news conference, Obama said that the U.S. should have occupied Libya in the aftermath of the overthrow of the Gadhafi government. The president still refused to acknowledge the degree of destabilization and impoverishment that has characterized Africa's once-most-prosperous state since the Western intervention of 2011.

The planned occupation and bombing campaign will inevitably create even greater levels of disruption and dislocation. The earlier and continuing wars of destabilization and regime-change in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen have caused the influx of hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees fleeing these regions. European Union governments aim to stop the flow, but further wars will only exacerbate suffering in the region.

U.S. imperialism has been increasing its military presence with its Africa Command (AFRICOM), which has thousands of troops on the continent and off its shores. Pentagon forces and contractors are building temporary bases, airstrips, intelligence-gathering operations and forming partnerships with neocolonial-dominated regimes.

In Somalia, the U.S. provides substantial funding and coordination for the 22,000-member African Union Mission (AMISOM), along with maintenance of drone operations and a CIA field station. Flotillas of Pentagon warships are patrolling the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia, right across from Yemen. Washington is waging a proxy war there against the Islamic Republic of Iran through its support for an alliance led by Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

These developments indicate that the militarism of Washington and Wall Street will continue throughout the remaining year of the Obama administration and into the reign of whomever takes control of the U.S. government in 2017. □

No to the ban on Communist Party of Ukraine!

HANDS OFF ANTI-FASCISTS!

Workers World Party condemns the Dec. 16 Kiev District Administrative Court ruling banning the activities of the Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU) throughout the country. We stand with the members of the KPU, and with all Ukrainian communists and anti-fascists, in their struggle against the U.S.-backed ultraright regime.

The court's ruling, affirming a lawsuit brought by the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice, was a foregone conclusion. But it cements Ukraine's role as a laboratory for the growth of political repression, violent fascist elements and anti-communist ideology in Europe, under the watchful guidance of the International Monetary Fund, NATO and U.S. imperialism.

Communist Party leader Petro Simonenko announced that his party will appeal the court's decision to the European Court of Human Rights.

It's no coincidence that the decision came just days after U.S. Vice President Joe Biden made his fourth high-level visit to Kiev on Dec. 7-8, where he spoke before the Parliament. Since the February 2014 coup that overthrew the legally elected Viktor Yanukovich government, Biden has taken on the role of colonial governor, delivering money, talking points and marching orders to the junta headed by oligarch President Petro Poroshenko and

Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk.

Biden's visit and the anti-communist ban also come in the context of increasing aggression by Kiev against the independent Donbass people's republics, whose people continue to heroically resist in the face of shelling of civilians, economic blockade and international isolation.

The ban on the KPU is an attack on all communists, socialists, anti-fascists and anyone who dares speak out against the regime. We recall the long list of crimes perpetrated against the left in Ukraine, including the massacre of 48 people at the House of Trade Unions in Odessa on May 2, 2014; violent assaults against the KPU and other opposition marches and protests, including against elderly people and veterans; the arrest, kidnapping and disappearance of hundreds of activists and journalists; the de facto outlawing — under threat of death or imprisonment — of the revolutionary Marxist organization Union Borotba (Struggle), whose members were forced into exile or underground, and other Marxist groups; the banning of the victory flag and communist symbols prior to the 70th anniversary of the Soviet defeat of Nazi Germany on May 9, 2015; and the regime's eleva-

tion to national heroes of Stepan Bandera and other fascist quislings who collaborated with Hitler and carried out atrocities against the Ukrainian people.

And, of course, there is the illegal, criminal and genocidal war against the multinational, primarily Russian-speaking population of the Donbass mining region — who refused to acquiesce to a regime that demonized workers and Russian speakers, and voted for independence in a democratic referendum in May 2014, establishing the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics.

The U.S.-funded and -armed war against Donbass has cost at least 9,000 lives thus far, according to the latest United Nations report. Throughout December, the war crimes of the Ukrainian army and fascist "volunteers" have again escalated, as the junta continues to build up military power for its war of conquest in defiance of the Minsk ceasefire agreement.

Following Wall Street's dictates, the

Obama administration, Sen. John McCain, and the leaders of both the Democratic and Republican parties are united in their desire to establish a military foothold on Russia's western border to further their domination of the region economically, politically and militarily.

The events in Ukraine also provide further evidence of the U.S. ruling class's increasing dependence on fascist-type movements to maintain its rule in the midst of a deepening global capitalist crisis — from the white supremacist Donald Trump campaign and police terror against people of color in the U.S., to ultraright forces in Syria and Venezuela.

While the eyes of the world are focused on the escalating war in Syria and the Middle East, where U.S. "regime change" plans also target Russia, the workers of the world must not forget the other front in this war: in Ukraine and Donbass. We must do all we can to build solidarity with the heroic struggle against the Kiev regime.

U.S. imperialism out of Ukraine! Hands off the Communist Party, the Donbass republics and all anti-fascist forces! □

WAR WITHOUT VICTORY by Sara Flounders

Available on amazon.com and bookstores around the country.
PentagonAchillesHeel.com

WORKERS WORLD editorials

Saudi women's struggle

No country on earth is more brutal and oppressive in its treatment of women than Saudi Arabia. The Saudi state, which is officially controlled by men of the royal family, has kept women encased and immobilized in a poisonous web of binding religious and legal restrictions, like the victims of a monstrous spider.

This December, the monarchy that rules this rich and powerful oil kingdom made a concession. For the very first time, women were allowed to vote and run for office in local elections to municipal councils.

It was a very small concession. A mountain of restrictions on women's lives and actions remain. But Saudi women have had to fight hard to get even this far. Out of a total population of 20 million, only 131,000 women were registered to vote in the election, but some 82 percent of them cast their ballots. Some 19 women won seats in municipal councils, which, like all political bodies in Saudi Arabia, have only an "advisory" role — decisions are made by the princes.

The candidates could not campaign directly — they were not allowed to show their faces to men, who had to speak for them. They could not drive to the polls or to meetings about their campaigns. Women are not allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia.

Despite all the restrictions, 979 women had the courage to run for office. The reaction of Saudi women to the election was mixed. Some saw it as a great victory; others were skeptical and saw it as mere

show on the part of the rulers. The opening to women was expected; it had been decreed in 2011 by then-King Abdullah, who has since died.

An important thing to keep in mind: This electoral change involved only Saudi citizens. There are millions of immigrant workers in Saudi Arabia, most from Africa and Asia, who have absolutely no rights. Many of them are women who do domestic work for pitiful wages, if they are paid at all. Many are sexually abused by their employers and have no legal recourse. This election had no direct effect on their lives.

Saudi Arabia is one of the U.S.'s main partners in the Middle East. Between 1950 and 2006, one-fifth of all U.S. arms sales went to Saudi Arabia. Billions of dollars are given every year so the Saudis can buy more expensive U.S. military equipment and fatten the bank accounts of the war profiteers. More recently, the Pentagon has provided drones, special forces and military coordination for the murderous Saudi offensive against rebel forces in the country of Yemen, the poorest in the region.

While capitalist politicians in the U.S. like to claim they have helped pressure Saudi Arabia to grant more human rights to its people, the truth is actually the opposite. It has been support from Washington and other imperialist capitals that has built up a clique of despotic Saudi aristocrats into a military and economic power that opposes all progressive change in the region. □

Why billionaires (like Trump) love 'free' elections

There was a time -- it seems like ages ago -- when we could pick up a newspaper or turn on the TV and be able to see or read about the progressive changes that were sweeping the country.

First, there was the Occupy movement, with creative ways, like flash mobs, of standing against war and repression.

Simultaneously with this was the movement of immigrant youth, who risked everything to go public with their passionate plea to change the draconian and exclusionary anti-immigrant laws and regulations that have led people, especially those coming from Latin America, into mass incarceration instead of a better life.

Then came the low-wage workers' movement, which finally got some attention when Walmart and other giant chains that pay their employees a pittance were confronted with large demonstrations of workers and their supporters.

Most recently, it is the Black Lives Matter movement, which coalesced around the anger of Black communities devastated by police murders that have become almost routine. Viewers could even get to see the videos that prove the police lie when they claim "self-defense" after shooting down young Black men. A wave of protests followed, led by Black people and supported by many whites, especially on the campuses.

But what are we seeing and reading about now? The Republican debates. An almost nightly show that is disgustingly anti-worker, anti-immigrant, racist, sexist and homophobic to the core.

The quadrennial elections have come along just in time to rescue big money from all the progressive movements that have begun moving in an anti-capitalist direction.

Billionaires call the shots in these elections. The rich always have, but their buying of the entire electoral process has become even more outrageous since the Supreme Court decision known as "Citizens United," which allows unlimited funds to be spent on political campaigns, thus virtually ensuring that the super rich will get their way.

This is what those who trumpet "the American way" mean when they call for "free elections" in countries the U.S. ruling class doesn't like. Such elections are "free" all right -- free for the highest bidder. The very process by which U.S.-style elections are carried out -- with literally billions of dollars worth of publicity for the candidates chosen by the super rich -- is designed to counteract any freedom of thought on the part of the masses by bombarding them with the most hateful and reactionary ideas.

Trump is by far the most vociferous in this, but the others running in the Republican primaries all add their own poison to the mix. You would think their purpose was to make the Democrats look good by comparison. Which is why it's important to remember that most of the imperialist wars undertaken by this country have been started under Democratic administrations, which also bailed out the billionaires with trillions of dollars of the people's money.

Workers World Party is running two Black candidates in 2016 -- Monica Moorehead for president and Lamont Lilly for vice president -- not to embellish but to expose these fraudulent elections. You'll be reading more about their revolutionary socialist campaign in these pages, which will give militant support to the progressive mass struggles now sidelined by the capitalist media. □

U.S.-Cuba relations after one year

Revolution holds firm on principles

By Cheryl LaBash

One year ago, U.S. President Barack Obama admitted what the world already knew. In five decades, the genocidal blockade of Cuba had failed to achieve the stated U.S. objective: overturning the Cuban socialist revolution. The Cuban people, their mass organizations and unions, with the leadership of the Cuban Communist Party, have held firmly to their principles of solidarity, internationalism and the priority of developing human beings as the goal and purpose of society.

Since the Jan. 1, 1959, revolution overturned the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship, those principles have remained the bedrock of the Cuban revolution. Now Cuban officials calmly reiterate that socialism, sovereignty and self-determination are not negotiable. The Cu-

ban people have overwhelmingly voted, supported and defended these principles. Everyone should believe it.

The advances in Cuba-U.S. relations this past year happened only because the U.S. released the three Cuban state security agents. The Cuban 5 are now fully reunited with their families. This includes Gerardo Hernández, whom U.S. courts had sentenced to two life terms plus 15 years.

The recent book "Back Channel to Cuba," by Peter Kornbluh and William M. LeoGrande (University of North Carolina Press, 2014), documents that Cuba has forgone better relations with the U.S. rather than concede on a matter of principle. Consider Cuba's internationalist aid that 40 years ago ensured the independence of Angola and the later defeat of racist apartheid in South Africa and the release of Nelson Mandela.

Normal relations? Not with blockade in place

Certainly, there are now mutually respectful direct discussions and negotiations. Cuba was removed from the U.S. "list of countries sponsoring terrorism" — a spurious unilateral and self-serving list that should never have included Cuba, itself having endured terror attacks from U.S. soil. There are agreements to resume direct postal delivery, protect the environment and reports that commercial flights will soon replace the many mostly Florida-based charter flights.

There is a Cuban ambassador at a Cu-

ban Embassy in Washington, D.C., with a Cuban flag proudly flying. And a U.S. Embassy in Havana.

The rapid pace of visible changes in U.S.-Cuba relations over the past year overshadows the fact that the economic, commercial and financial blockade is still in place. Cuba still cannot use U.S. dollars in international trade and the extraterritorial provisions continue to penalize international banks for Cuba transactions and chill otherwise legal transactions. U.S. law still expressly prohibits U.S. residents from admitting they are vacationing in Cuba.

In his Dec. 17 statement, Cuban President Raúl Castro said, "The persecution of Cuba's legitimate financial transactions as well as the extraterritorial impact of the blockade, which causes damages and hardships to our people and is the main obstacle to the development of the Cuban economy, have been tightened." (cubaminrex.cu)

Granma reported that Cuba's chief negotiator, Josefina Vidal, "recalled that the U.S. president has broad powers to change the situation and could 'expand the scope of these measures or take others.'

"She specifically noted that Obama could allow Cuba to use the dollar in international transactions, access private credit and permit trade in both directions, and not unilaterally as has been the case to date.

"She added that no progress has been made this year on key issues for nor-

malized relations, such as an end to the blockade, the return of the territory illegally occupied in Guantánamo, the end of subversive programs and illegal broadcasting, and the continued preferential migratory policy toward Cubans that encourages illegal migration."

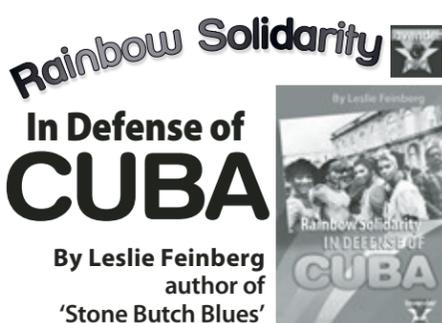
Washington says the preferential immigration policy for Cubans who reach U.S. soil will remain — regardless of how they arrive. The Cuban Adjustment Act's "wet-foot dry-foot" provisions reward dangerous migration from Cuba either by raft or through Latin America via human traffickers.

Recognizing that the people of Cuba are among the most highly educated in the world, the U.S. government continues its brain-drain policy called "Medical Professional Parole." This program attempts to entice Cuban doctors to abandon international assignments. In sharp contrast, Cuban medical schools train thousands of doctors from around the world, including from underserved U.S. communities, and then send them back home.

Hands off IFCO

Even as U.S.-Cuba relations change, the U.S. government has launched an attack on one of the organizations in the U.S. most consistent in its solidarity with Cuba. Washington has threatened the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization's tax-exempt designation. IFCO has supported the 27 Pastors for

Continued on page 11



Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba is an edited compilation of 25 articles from the *Workers World* newspaper series by Feinberg entitled *Lavender & Red*, online at workers.org. Available at major booksellers online

After ceasefire announcement

Casualties rise as Saudis continue to bomb Yemen

By Abayomi Azikiwe

Dec. 19 -- A Saudi-led coalition supported by the U.S. continued to bomb Yemen on Dec. 17 despite announcements of a ceasefire.

Various Yemeni political parties and alliances, meeting in Switzerland, had agreed on a seven-day cessation of hostilities in mid-December. Nonetheless, there has been no easing of tensions on the ground or of air strikes carried out by Saudi Arabia and supported by the Gulf Cooperation Council. The deadly bombardments utilize Pentagon intelligence and refueling technology.

Meanwhile, ground forces composed of the same Saudi-led alliance have launched an offensive near the capital city of Sanaa. Ansarullah (Houthi) forces have controlled the capital of the impoverished Middle Eastern state since September 2014.

The Ansarullah movement has its origins among the Shiite population in the north of Yemen, who have been waging a protracted struggle against neighboring Saudi Arabia for many years.

Opponents of the Houthis say they are backed financially, politically and militarily by the Islamic Republic of Iran, thereby seeking to frame the escalating conflict as a proxy war between Riyadh and Tehran.

Military units under the banner of ousted President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, who are supported by the U.S.-backed Saudi-led coalition, have been fighting in Ansarullah-controlled areas in Sanaa province, after claiming significant gains in Marib province, just east of the capital. They also attacked a military base northeast of the capital.

An estimated 68 people died on Dec. 19 in clashes between pro-Saudi fighters and Ansarullah units in northern Yemen, local residents reported, prompting additional warnings by the United Nations of a total breakdown in the Swiss negotiations. The casualties included 28 fighters allied with Hadi and the Saudi-GCC coalition.

Sources in the northern region reported that the Ansarullah units lost 40 people in heavy battles near the northwestern town of Haradh, which was attacked earlier in the week by Hadi loyalists. Approximately 50 Ansarullah and 40 Saudi-backed fighters were wounded in the clashes.

Fighting intensified during the early morning hours on Dec. 19, when Saudi-GCC allied forces sought to move towards the Red Sea port of Midi. The Hadi and Saudi-allied forces, trained in nearby Saudi Arabia, had invaded northern Yemen from the monarchy on Dec. 17, attacking Haradh.

Peace Friendship caravans to Cuba. For more information, see ifconews.org or tinyurl.com/gmpeyda.

Cuba's supporters in the U.S. insist: "We cannot allow the United States to continue with its 54-year-old failed policy to destroy the Cuban Revolution. We use this day, December 17, to again demand that the United States illegal blockade be lifted and that the United States respect the sovereignty and self-determination of the Cuban people. As co-chairs of the National Network on Cuba, we call on all U.S. solidarity organizations to continue working firmly and united until the blockade is lifted." See the full NNOC statement at NNOC.info.

A graphic remembrance of Dec. 17, 2014 is at: theInternationalCommittee.org/timeline.

LaBash is one of the National Network on Cuba co-chairs.

Ansarullah forces are fighting alongside Yemeni soldiers who remain loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who left office after demonstrations in 2011. The escalation of conflict in Yemen since late March has resulted in the deaths of 7,500 people, the wounding and injuring of 14,000 more and the displacement of millions. Fighting has spilled over into eastern Saudi Arabia, where the population is Shiite.

Washington's central role in Yemen war

The Saudi-GCC coalition, which uses Pentagon-provided warplanes, bombs and intelligence resources, is obviously escalating its attacks on several regions of the country, accusing the Ansarullah of violations of the ceasefire. However, the forces allied with the Houthis have no air power and are fighting on the ground against well-armed units of the Saudi-backed militias, who are backed by special forces and troops from Riyadh, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Sudan.

In addition to these foreign forces involved in efforts to drive back the Ansarullah from the areas they have seized over the last 15 months, the UAE has recruited and deployed troops from the U.S.-backed South American state of Colombia. This government is the third-largest recipient of Washington's direct aid, after Israel and Egypt.

The Nov. 25 New York Times reported, "The United Arab Emirates has secretly dispatched hundreds of Colombian mercenaries to Yemen to fight in that country's raging conflict, adding a volatile new element in a complex proxy war that has drawn in the United States and Iran."

The French news agency AFP reported on Dec. 19 that only "about 300 of the 3,000 Colombians recruited so far by the



UAE 'decided voluntarily' to fight as full-fledged mercenaries in southern Yemen." Emirati officials "initially decided to deploy 800 Colombians to Yemen, but had to rethink their plans after recruits complained that fighting in Yemen was not included in their contracts."

This decision to contract Colombian troops was made in part as a result of the killing of 30 Emirati troops during fighting in September in the south of Yemen. The arrangement for the deployment of the Colombians was carried out by Blackwater, the so-called military services firm that has trained special forces in the UAE. AFP said its source was former Colombian army officers, at least one of whom was later employed by Blackwater.

Blackwater military contractors played a significant role during the initial U.S. occupation of Iraq in 2003-2004, when some of their employees were accused of committing atrocities.

The humanitarian crisis inside Yemen has reached catastrophic proportions, as the Saudi-GCC coalition has prevented food supplies, medicines and water from reaching affected areas in the conflict. Hospitals, schools and residential districts have not been spared in the Saudi bombing, explaining the high rate of civilian casualties.

Ports on the Yemeni coast have been bombed repeatedly since March. Yemenis have taken refuge in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa, which also hosts a military base of the U.S. Africa Command (Africom) at Camp Lemonier.

It was reported that a decline in fighting on the ground in some areas provided hope for the immediate future, but many are concerned that it could erupt again soon with the same ferocity. The Saudi-GCC coalition has been bombing Yemen since late March and also providing arms and coordination for the ground war designed to force the Ansarullah and its allies out of southern and central Yemen.

A prisoner swap was halted in the Bayda province after local leaders blocked the transfer, saying their fighters were not included in the operations.

London's supply of arms to Saudi Arabia has been criticized by leading British newspapers, as well as Amnesty International, for fueling the conflict that has killed thousands. British newspapers such as the Independent and the Guardian suggest that the supply of arms from London is creating an even more deadly situation on the ground in Yemen.

Talks are scheduled to continue in Switzerland. It remains to be seen what real impact the discussions will have, considering the escalation of fighting in the central and northern regions of the country.

Yemen is yet another example of the disastrous imperialist war policy directed towards numerous West Asian and North African states. At present, 60 million people have been displaced from their homes as a direct result of these Pentagon-fueled wars. This crisis of human displacement is the largest in history, even exceeding figures from the conclusion of World War II. □

Autoworkers, solidarity and socialism

The following excerpted talk was given by Martha Grevatt, a longtime autoworker and unionist, at the Workers World Party national conference Nov. 7-8, 2015 in New York City. See workers.org for full talk.



WW PHOTO BRENDA RYAN
Martha Grevatt

Our founder, Sam Marcy, had a knack for reading trends, and "High Tech Low Pay," written in 1984, stands the test of time.

"Joblessness is only one aspect of the changing nature of work in America. The pauperization of work is increasingly evident." Sam cited Bureau of Labor Statistics reports showing that, of people who lost full-time jobs during the Reagan recession, 46 percent were working for less and 45 percent were still unemployed. There is nothing different three decades later.

The pauperization Sam described reflected a cataclysmic shift from an industrial to a service economy. But the industrial working class has been pauperized as well.

After the [1981] breaking of PATCO [the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization], the bosses were able to wrest previously unthinkable concessions. An evil menace to union solidarity began to appear in labor contracts: two-tier. It was a clever way to push wages down -- leave the wages of current workers alone but pay future workers much less.

In 2007 two-tier came to the [United

Auto Workers] contracts with the Big Three auto companies [General Motors, Ford and Chrysler]. Since then tens of thousands of lower-paid workers have replaced higher-seniority workers who left the companies during bankruptcy. This has brought many more workers of color and women into the industry.

Sam commented that the fight for comparable worth -- to make the work traditionally performed by women pay what comparable male jobs pay -- "has broad implications for labor as a whole, since it is an effort to level wages upward by increasing the wages of the lowest-paid at a time when the whole thrust of the capitalist economy is to level wages downward." He could have been writing about today's fight to break up two-tier pay.

That is the meaning of the Chrysler contract struggle. The class-collaborationist UAW leadership brought a contract to us for a vote -- a contract praised by Fiat Chrysler Automobiles CEO Sergio Marchionne -- that institutionalized two-tier pay. A revolt erupted.

Not only was the contract voted down 2 to 1, but there was organized opposition in the form of T-shirts, leafleting, rallies, social media campaigns and more. At a parts warehouse in California, first- and second-tier workers came together, making T-shirts that read, "Solidarity, no

more tiers, vote no." In Toledo they chanted, "Hell no, Sergio."

The next contract brought to a vote passed overwhelmingly. If you read it cover to cover, there are more tiers than before. But thousands of lower-paid workers are getting substantial raises and now have a path to top pay.

It wasn't what the company wanted, and it wasn't in the strategy of the UAW leadership. But we fought and won. Even the bourgeois media has credited the UAW [contract] with setting the wage bar higher, calling it a boost to the Fight for \$15 and a union campaign.

Workers want back everything they gave up. As our comrade Larry Hicks, a GM worker, told the Detroit News, "They've got plenty of money so let us get some of that money."

Under socialism equal pay will be the norm; there will be no tiers. In "The State and Revolution," Lenin explained: "The whole of society will have become a single office and a single factory, with equality of labor and pay."

"But," Lenin elaborates, "[that] is only a necessary step for thoroughly cleansing society of all the infamies and abominations of capitalist exploitation, and for further progress."

What is that further progress? It is the advance to the second stage of communism, governed by the words of Marx: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!" □



En Alabama, policías, Klan y estado van juntos

Por Minnie Bruce Pratt

De acuerdo con un blog activista de Alabama, el Henry County Report, algunos policías y ex policías en Dothan-Alabama, plantaron evidencias falsas de drogas y armas de fuego en jóvenes negros sin antecedentes penales, de 1996 a 2004, lo que resultó en muchas convicciones aparentemente injustas. El artículo del 1 de diciembre del blog también culpa al fiscal de distrito Doug Valeska, del Distrito Judicial 20 de Alabama, de encubrir este hecho delictivo y proceder con el enjuiciamiento de personas inocentes.

El blog además señala que los miembros del Departamento de Policía de Dothan pertenecen a una organización neo-confederada racista. Uno de los mencionados, el ex sargento Andy Hughes, es ahora director adjunto de Seguridad Nacional de Alabama. Un blog de fotos muestra a un grupo de hombres blancos posando con una gran bandera de la Confederación y los identifica como policías de Dothan, incluyendo a Hughes. (Al.com)

El blogger, Jon Collins, del Proyecto de Justicia de Alabama, dice que sus cargos están corroborados por récords, algunos de los cuales ha publicado, filtrados por miembros del departamento de policía. Él declara que autenticó los documentos filtrados con varios policías, entre ellos un ex sargento de la Oficina de Asuntos Internos Dothan. (alabamajusticeproject.com)

Medios sociales y corporativos rápidamente publicaron el informe, y rápidamente minimizaron los documentos aduciendo que no daban ninguna prueba definitiva de los cargos. Un comentario de la revista Slate dijo: "La evidencia que Carroll ha presentado hasta el momento no es suficiente. Eso no significa que el Departamento de Policía de Dothan es inocente de las acusaciones. Sólo significa que no podemos pretender que sabemos que sus policías son culpables de los crímenes que Carroll alega.... En este momento no sabemos lo que pasó en Dothan". (Tinyurl.com/nho9hzp)

Pero sí sabemos lo que pasó en Dothan. Si miramos más allá de los criterios estrechos de lo que constituyen "pruebas" dentro de un sistema de derecho burgués, podemos acusar de racismo a la policía de Dothan, la ciudad y al propio sistema de injusticia de Alabama.

Podemos comenzar con el hecho de que el jefe de policía de Dothan Steve Parish nombró a su hijo, Nathan Bedford Parish, por el fundador y Gran Mago del Ku Klux Klan, Nathan Bedford Forrest.

Luego podemos observar que en junio de 2015, un juez federal falló a favor de un caso presentado por un policía veterano negro contra la ciudad de Dothan. La orden establece que hubo un patrón de racismo en el departamento, incluyendo el hecho de que Parish y otros policías de Dothan han sido o son miembros de los Hijos de los Veteranos Confederados. Este grupo aboga por un retorno a un sistema de esclavitud y apartheid, y ha estado en la lista de "Vigilancia del Odio" del Southern Poverty Center porque los elementos derechistas más extremos se han apoderado de los capítulos locales. (tinyurl.com/p3fjpb)



El caso federal enumera muchos comentarios viles y artefactos racistas dentro de la estación de policía, incluyendo una representación de un presidente Barack Obama carbonizado y linchado. (tinyurl.com/hkf962w)

Existe el racismo en el sistema jurídico local. El procurador general Doug Valeska, del Vigésimo Circuito Judicial, ha tenido casos impugnados en apelación debido a su exclusión sistemática de negros en los jurados, así como veredictos eliminados por "prueba ilícita y comentarios inapropiados a los jurados". (Washington Post, 3 de diciembre)

Hay una profunda historia de racismo entre la policía local en Alabama - desde los "patrulleros de esclavos" que aprehendían y golpeaban para retornarlos a la esclavitud a las/os negros que escapaban, hasta el programa 'arrendamiento de condenados' del tiempo de la era de Reconstrucción que re esclavizaba a los trabajadores negros liberados y pagaban sus salarios al Estado, en vez de a los trabajadores. Hoy en día, las "prisiones de deudores" obtienen ganancias cobrándole honorarios exorbitantes por los servicios judiciales a las/os prisioneros, principalmente gente de color.

Después de la criminalización del trabajo de personas negras libres en todo el Sur en la década de 1870, además de estar atrapadas en el sistema 'arrendamiento de condenados', también los blancos individualmente les hacían trabajar por la fuerza - de hecho, otra esclavitud.

Tal fue el caso en 1903, cuando un fiscal federal que estaba exponiendo cientos de casos de servidumbre involuntaria en Alabama recibió una desesperada llamada de un abogado de Dothan. Su cliente, Enoc Patterson, estaba retenido como peón - por el jefe de la policía de Dothan.

En 1912, la ciudad de Dothan se convirtió en una ciudad totalmente blanca cometiendo "limpieza racial" cuando expulsó a toda la gente negra del pueblo en un motín de supremacía blanca. (Elliot Jaspin, "Aguas Amargas: la historia oculta de limpieza racial en Estados Unidos")

Este espantoso racismo no es una cosa del pasado en Dothan. En 2011 y 2013, paralelo a una oleada en EUA de reclutamiento racista, volantes del Ku Klux Klan fueron distribuidos en la ciudad, y en el 2009 el KKK había prendido fuego a una cruz en un barrio negro en la ciudad contigua de Ozark. (Dothan Eagle)

En el Henry County Report, Jon Collins pide una investigación federal sobre

El "sindicato" que no es tal

EDITORIAL WW-Mundo Obrero

15 de diciembre 2015

La historia de los sindicatos se remonta al siglo 18 y la Revolución Industrial. Mientras no existieron los sindicatos, los trabajadores parecían existir a merced de los patronos, quienes les hacían trabajar hasta morir a la vez que les hacían pasar hambre junto a sus familias. Pero a medida que el número de trabajadores asalariados en esas fábricas infernales comenzaron a aumentar y concentrarse, fueron imbuidos del sentido de su propia fuerza.

Ellos descubrieron cómo organizar y reunirse para exigir mejores salarios, menos horas y mejores condiciones. Mostraron a los patronos que a menos que ganaran mejoras, abandonarían el trabajo masivamente y cerrarían las fábricas. Nacieron los sindicatos.

Los sindicatos y los patronos son como el agua y el fuego - no mezclan.

Ahora viene Donald Trump, el epítome del opresor súper rico de las/os trabajadoras, con una cuenta bancaria más grande que una montaña de oro. Y está diciendo que tiene apoyo sindical.

¿Qué sindicato podrá ser?

"Trump respaldado por el sindicato de la policía", decía un titular de US News & World Report. Ah, es la Asociación Benevolente de Policía de Nueva Inglaterra. Bueno, eso son dos mentiras. No es un "sindicato", ni es "benevolente".

Parece que estos policías les gusta mucho lo que dijo Trump sobre restringir a las/os musulmanes de EUA. También les gusta su plan para extender la pena de muerte - como si no fuera ya una de las más duras del mundo - a cualquier persona que mata a un policía, por cual-

el racismo actual en el sistema legal y en el Departamento de Policía de Dothan. Sin lugar a dudas, el racismo existe, dada la evidencia de la historia, así como los recientes casos de la corte federal - como existe en todo EUA.

Quinton Parrish, un hombre afroamericano en la mira de la policía de Dothan, ha solicitado que intervenga el Departamento de Justicia de EUA. Describe las acciones de la policía de Dothan como "una forma de terrorismo doméstico que debe detenerse". (Henry County Report, 7 de diciembre)

Collins dice que las fuentes aún anónimas que filtraron los documentos esperan que "el estado de ánimo del país" es ahora tal que se pueda llamar la atención sobre la injusticia en Dothan.

Al entrar EUA en un período de mayor crisis económica y belicismo, aumenta el que la gente de color, especialmente las/os inmigrantes y musulmanes, se conviertan en chivos expiatorios.

La policía se creó para proteger los bienes e intereses de la clase propietaria. La función de la policía es mantener a todas/os los trabajadores y todas/os los oprimidos - mujeres, personas de color, personas con discapacidad y personas de géneros y sexualidades no conformistas - de levantarse juntas/os contra las brutales condiciones impuestas a nosotras/os por la explotación capitalista.

quier razón. ¿Y si es un policía violando a una mujer o extorsionando al dueño de una pequeña tienda con una pistola a su cabeza? No importa.

Es torcer la verdad llamar a estos sindicatos "asociaciones benévolas de policía". Los patronos llaman a la policía para romper los piquetes, no para hacer cumplir los derechos de las/os trabajadoras. A pesar de que más gente de color se ha incluido en la fuerza, los "sindicatos" de policía han sido bastiones de racismo y supremacía blanca, y la función de la policía ha seguido siendo la de reprimir violentamente a los sectores más pobres de la clase obrera - nunca a los delincuentes de cuello blanco que se roban millones. En EUA, debido a la herencia de siglos de racismo, esto significa que la policía es una fuerza de ocupación violenta en las comunidades de color.

Entonces, ¿qué deben hacer las/os trabajadoras sobre esto? Principalmente, ¿cómo pueden las/os trabajadoras blancas en el movimiento obrero fortalecer su solidaridad con las/os trabajadoras de color y las/os inmigrantes, como las/os musulmanes que Trump quiere prohibir en este país?

Una buena manera de empezar sería sacar este "sindicato" del movimiento sindical. No pertenece allí. Es como tener una serpiente venenosa en la cama.

No es un problema de republicanos-contrademócratas. Es una complicidad entre un grupo de asesinos anti-inmigrantes racistas con armas de fuego y un intolerante súper rico que odia a todos los sindicatos verdaderos. Juntos, están tratando de llevar a cabo una maniobra que podría cubrir de desgracia a todo el movimiento obrero.

¡Di no a Trump! □

Una de las fuerzas que cambian "el estado de ánimo del país" ha sido el activismo consistente contra la brutalidad policial y el terror estatal por el movimiento Vidas Negras Importan y sus aliadas/os en todo EUA.

Ahora, la resistencia contra la campaña racista de Donald Trump, como el cierre exitoso de su manifestación recientemente en Carolina del Norte, está levantando solidaridad a través de un espectro cada vez más amplio de personas. Una Guardia de Defensa de Trabajadoras contra el KKK ha sido puesta en marcha por varios locales de Vermont del sindicato United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America/UE.

Una resistencia inquebrantable a la policía y a la injusticia estatal contra las/os trabajadoras y todas/os los oprimidos sólo puede lograrse a través de organización militante antirracista. □



El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

Fred Goldstein utiliza las leyes de la acumulación capitalista de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué el capitalismo global ha llegado finalmente a un punto de inflexión.